

Inclusive Youth Facilitation

Partially adapted from materials created and compiled by Ginlin Woo and Mike Beebe

Diversity exists in the many ways we are all different from each other. There are many types of differences, including:

- ⇒ Age or generation
- ⇒ Body-size or characteristics
- ⇒ Country or nation of origin
- ⇒ Ability or disability
- ⇒ Education level
- ⇒ Ethnicity
- ⇒ Socio-economic or income level
- ⇒ Gender
- ⇒ Religion or spirituality
- ⇒ Race
- ⇒ Sexual orientation
- ⇒ Family status
- ⇒ Language
- ⇒ Gender identification
- ⇒ Skin color
- ⇒ Learning style
- ⇒ Mental health or illness

When facilitating the *Roadmap*, it's important to be aware of the many types of diversity and the many different cultural memberships that youth may have. Inclusive facilitation acknowledges and understands these differences. It also tries to make the learning environment as welcoming and safe as possible for all participants.

Tips for Facilitating Inclusively with Youth

The following lists are not intended to be a complete guide to facilitating inclusively. They are partial lists facilitators can use to start thinking about different ways to ensure that youth facilitation is as inclusive as possible.

Self-Awareness and Modeling Inclusive Behavior

- ⇒ Acknowledge and understand your own cultural memberships.
- ⇒ Ask for input and wisdom from all participants.
- ⇒ If facilitating as part of a group, work collaboratively and switch up which facilitators are working together throughout the process.
- ⇒ Acknowledge your own mistakes. Ask youth to tell you when you make a mistake.
- ⇒ Honor cultural values and traditions. Make a place for them while facilitating. This can include supplementing the curriculum or encouraging discussion at different points of the curriculum. Facilitators can also look for activities related to building cultural competency to see if they can be incorporated as energizers or other supplemental activities.

Supporting Youths' Diversity

- ⇒ Commit to meeting each youth as a unique individual with talents, hopes, passions, gifts, and challenges who has many cultural memberships.
- ⇒ Work at being sensitive to youth's challenges, including their lives at home and school. Try to avoid making generalizations and unfeeling comments or creating expectations that cannot be easily met given current financial, emotional, physical, and cultural realities.
- ⇒ Ensure that all activities are appropriate for all of your participants. All youth should be able to participate equally, including youth with physical disabilities, youth with different learning styles, etc.
- ⇒ Encourage discussions about diversity, difference, and/or discrimination throughout the curriculum as appropriate. Encourage youth to be honest during these discussions. Even if the curriculum seems to be coming from a certain point of view, allow youth to debate that point of view.

Creating and Maintaining a Safe Space

- ⇒ Ensure that group agreements in Unit 1 are respectful and establish a safe space for all participants. Some group agreements could be "use positive and appropriate language" or the "Oops/Ouch" rule. The Oops/Ouch rule allows anyone to acknowledge if they realize they've said something insensitive by simply saying "oops". Conversely, if someone's feelings are hurt by something that is said, they can say "ouch". The Oops/Ouch rule can be used to start a conversation about the mistake or simply to acknowledge it.
- ⇒ Try to avoid letting cliques form or letting youth fall into cliques they may be in outside of CE. Change groups, seating, and partners often.
- ⇒ Be open to differing opinions without trying to influence them.
- ⇒ Plan ahead for potential "hotspots" in the curriculum. Prepare questions to encourage the discussion to move in a positive way, and also prepare different methods for diffusing conflict should the need arise.
- ⇒ If anyone (participant or facilitator) breaks a community agreement, remind them of the guidelines that all participants agreed to follow.